

City Council of the Mayor and Council of New Castle
Public Hearing and Special/Workshop Meeting
Town Hall – 201 Delaware Street – New Castle
Tuesday – February 22, 2011 – 6 p.m.

Present:

Council President William Barthel
Councilperson John Cochran
Councilperson John Gaworski
Councilperson Ted Megginson
Councilperson Teel Petty

Also present: Treasurer Janet Carlin, City Administrator Cathryn Thomas, Finance Director Marian Delaney, City Solicitor Daniel Losco

A Public Hearing was held on the following proposal:

To create new parking restrictions, as follows:

on 7th Street near the intersection of Delaware Street;
on 9th Street near the intersection of Washington Street.

President Barthel said the first item is a public hearing related to the parking issues on 7th Street brought to Council's attention at the last meeting by Beverly Ross and Jim Whisman, and issues on 9th Street brought up by Councilperson Gaworski. He opened the Public hearing.

Mr. Erv Thatcher said he is a property owner on 7th Street for 47 years and lives there. The parking has been murder for the last three years. He said the City Council is going to take parking away; he said to count the number of cars on the street. He complained Dr. Padmalingam has had a car in his driveway for two years and the tags are expired. When he built that office he was supposed to have off-street parking. Mr. Thatcher talked with Building Official Jeff Bergstrom who said he has to have the off-street parking, but nothing says he has to use it. He listed the number of cars people on the street have. He said if Council removes the six spots all it is doing is moving the problem up the street.

Mr. Thatcher said the 7th Street is not wide enough. He said the solution is to make the traffic one-way. He said he has been to the Council many times about the problem, now Beverly Ross and Jim Whisman came in and Council jumps. He said the other streets are wide enough to handle the traffic.

Councilperson Petty made a motion to adjourn the Public Hearing. Councilman Megginson seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

President Barthel said the workshop portion of the meeting would now begin.

Discussion among the Council members of a proposal to create new parking restrictions, as follows:

on 7th Street near the intersection of Delaware Street;
on 9th Street near the intersection of Washington Street.

President Barthel said he knows Mr. Thatcher has been before Council a lot and Council has listened. This is another way to evaluate a solution. The Council has been considering this for two years and Councilperson Petty said at the last meeting the previous Council had been considering this for two years as well.

Councilperson Megginson said Council knows there is a problem with street not being wide enough. The City tried it one-way and all that did was put traffic on every other street. The main thing being addressed at this meeting is the dangerous intersection. The City wants to extend the no parking zone at least two spaces on each side so there is room for two cars at the intersection.

He added he agreed with Mr. Thatcher that cars speed on that road, but the speed limit there is 25 mph. He showed photos of street.

Councilperson Cochran asked how making the street one-way would solve the parking problem.

Mr. Thatcher said there is more room if traffic is only going one-way.

Mr. Cochran said he agrees it will just move the problem up the street. He would like it one-way for a year.

President Barthel said that would require another public meeting. He pointed out people have come in from Sixth Street with concerns if it is made one-way on Seventh Street.

Mr. Cochran suggested doing some enforcement first.

Councilperson Megginson said the City should send Dr. Padmalingam a letter to use the off-street parking.

President Barthel asked how long ago that approval was made. Mr. Thatcher said probably 17 years ago.

Administrator Thomas said a previous Council approved Dr. Padmalingam's office for a handicapped parking space in front of the office. The Council at the time felt it was a reasonable request.

A discussion was held about the curbing and signage at the corner of the Seventh and Delaware Streets.

Councilperson Gaworski said he is not in favor of a yellow line. People are going to park there anyway.

Councilperson Cochran said he is suggesting keeping the yellow line where it is and enforcing it.

Councilperson Gaworski said he believes it is much safer to make it one-way from Delaware Street to South Street. It makes it safer at the intersection.

President Barthel said making the street one-way would need to be the subject of another meeting.

Councilperson Petty said she favors having a yellow line with enforcement, and look into changing the speed sign.

Administrator Thomas asked whether the City will be adding any parking restrictions in the area or just better defining existing parking restrictions.

Councilperson Gaworski said if the City is going to paint the curbs it might as well be made a tow-away zone.

Councilperson Megginson said it is still a dangerous situation there and the City should remove at least one or two parking spots on the left-hand side on the street going toward Delaware Street. And paint whatever the distance back from Delaware Street.

Motion, Discussion and Vote on a Resolution on the following proposal:

To create new parking restrictions, as follows:

- on 7th Street near the intersection of Delaware Street;
- on 9th Street near the intersection of Washington Street.

Councilperson Petty made a motion to approve the following proposal: to add no-parking at least two car lengths on the side where the accounting office is on Seventh Street, in front of the accounting firm. It will be signed, made a tow-away zone and curbs will be painted or it will be made clear that it is new no parking. And on Delaware Street it will be better defined and delineated where the existing no-parking is. On Delaware Street, the City will look at painting the street yellow to indicate where there is no parking. Council also agreed enforcement is needed in that area. The City also will send Dr. Padmalingam a letter expressing Council's concerns.

Councilperson Megginson seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Mr. Don Reese of 7th Street said that 28 months ago he and Councilperson Gaworski met with DelDOT and they were supposed to put a no left turn designation on 8th Street onto Delaware Street and also signage going toward the Farmer's Market so people cannot turn left into Amazon.

Councilperson Gaworski explained the issues related to parking on 9th Street near Deemer's Landing. As people are exiting 9th Street on to Washington Street, the right-hand side needs to be no parking—from the entrance to Deemer's Landing to the corner. There are normally three cars parked there daily. It does not allow safe turns in either direction. It is roughly 30 feet.

There is also a problem there on the corner on Washington Street, which is under DelDOT's control.

Councilperson Cochran made a motion to have no-parking approximately 30 feet from Washington Street to Deemer's Landing on Ninth Street. Councilperson Gaworski seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously.

Midyear Budget Review

Finance Director Marian Delaney provided a midyear budget review, including budget transfers being requested by Police Chief McDerby and some possible additional transfers. Any budget transfers will be handled at a regular City Council meeting.

President Barthel asked in general how the City's finances are at the midyear point? He said they seem in pretty good shape.

Ms. Delaney said the City ended the previous year with a fund balance of almost \$650,000 and that is about what it has now in a money market and another account.

A discussion was held about looking at where the best and safest location is for the City's funds.

Ms. Delaney said there is one payment remaining for the library, \$50,000, in the final quarter of the fiscal year.

Administrator Thomas said the annual budget is about \$5 million, and the fund balance is more than 10 percent of that. That is a good indicator that the finances are in good shape. The City is doing well.

President Barthel said the Trustees of the New Castle Common are meeting next week and the City should have an update shortly after on what's happening for the upcoming year.

Administrator Thomas said the City could consider in the future, with its current levels of savings, to look at establishing a capital reserve account.

Ms. Delaney said at this time in fiscal year 2009 the City had collected 75 percent of revenues; in fiscal 2010, 73 percent; and in fiscal 2011, 85 percent.

Councilperson Megginson asked if there is enough money in the budget for the expansion of the radio system purchase, previously requested by the Public Services Department. There was money budgeted for some new radios and a system for Public Works. If the City buys all nine radios, it will cost an additional \$4,600 for a total of \$11,483, but the City will get an \$800 rebate. If the City does not do it now, it will have to be budgeted for next year.

Administrator Thomas said money is available in the general fund contingency line. Council budgeted \$50,000 in that line. So far, \$3,783 has been used.

Councilperson Petty made a motion to adjourn the meeting and go into executive session. Councilperson Megginson seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

Councilperson Cochran made a motion to amend the motion. It was seconded by Councilperson Petty. The amended motion was to adjourn to go into an executive session for a strategy session regarding collective bargaining related to the City strategy for the upcoming FOP union negotiations. It was passed unanimously

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Dickinson
New Castle City Clerk